



THE DRUG POISONING CRISIS – NOT JUST AN URBAN PROBLEM
Daniel Schulz - January 13, 1989 – April 30, 2014



Disclosure

I HAVE NO DISCLOSURES OR CONFLICTS

Why we share our stories

Drug policy is based morals societal standards and beliefs, not evidence.

Stigma makes it hard for people to speak out., but many do

Families and individuals can help change the narrative by evoking empathy in the public, politicians, policy makers

Our painful stories open hearts and opening hearts leads to opening minds.

Warning: Substance use related death!



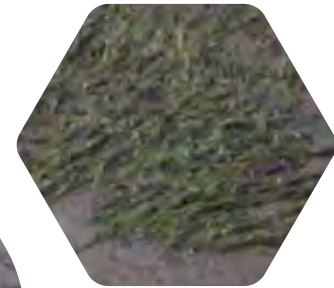


My Son Danny:
The Truth About Substance use, stigma, and drug poisoning









WE LOVE YOU.

BE SAFE.

**CARRY
NALOXONE.**



We draw the line here.

#BANTHEBODY

Canadian
Association of
People Who
Use
Drugs



Daniel (Danny) Schulz

JANUARY 13, 1989 - APRIL 30, 2014



It is with deep sadness that we announce the tragic death of Daniel (Danny) Schulz on April 30, 2014.

Danny leaves behind his loving parents Petra and Rick, brothers Jan and Julian, grandparents Fred and Erika in Calgary, and Veronika in Germany, uncle Tony (Joann), aunt Linda (Don), cousins Eula, Ina, and Everett, his extended family, the love of his life, Gavin, and his many wonderful friends who share our grief. He was predeceased by his uncle Michael (Mike) in 1993.

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without Danny,”

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to speak out to
stigma around
She is one of the
embers of Moms
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people who are ad-
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and recognizing
entable tragedy
urpose of Mon-
, said Mat Wong,
s’ lead nurse for
ose prevention

*Our family has
had the hardest
task ever —
learning to live
without Danny*

PETRA SCHULZ

During a moment of silence,
clusters of people lit candles
and bowed their heads in
the sunlight, remembering
those who’ve died from drug
overdoses.

“It’s unbearable, it’s hidden,
it’s heartbreaking,” Wong
said. “Every life is extreme-
ly valuable.”

*oellwand@
edmontonjournal.com
Twitter.com/Otiena*

Petra Schulz
International

by Sept 1, 2015

SOLE

Bob Marley's influence endures. *Arts&Life, D)*

EDMONTON JOURNAL

Breaking news at edmontonjournal.com

'I KNEW ... THAT WE'D COME TOO LATE'



One family's fentanyl tragedy

Parents speak out about son's overdose on injected painkiller

Petra and Matt Schulz sit with their son Danny's guitar. Schulz, 25, died on April 30 from fentanyl poisoning.

Globe Focus



at Edmonton's MacEwan University, has blogged and spoken about her son's death from a fentanyl overdose. AMBER BRACKEN FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL

HOW CANADA GOT ADDICTED TO FENTANYL

Manufactured in China, it easily crosses our porous borders, triggering a heroin-like bliss in users — and, all too often, death. The Globe investigates the rise of a fatal opioid

A special report by **Karen Howlett** in Toronto, **Justin Giovannetti** in Edmonton, **Nathan VanderKlippe** in Beijing and **Les Perreux** in Montreal



The Power of Parent Advocacy

Moms Stop the Harm (MSTH) is a network of Canadian families impacted by substance-use related harms and deaths.

3500 families Canada wide – sign up to BI

Mission: We advocate to end substance use related stigma, harms and death.

Provide peer support and welcome new families.



Substance use
and overdose
can affect
anyone

But it affects
some more than
others



20 Canadians die from drug poisoning every day

There was a total of **34,455 opioid toxicity deaths** between January 2016 and September 2022.

Majority of deaths in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario; increases observed in other regions

Most among young to middle-aged males.

Toxicity of supply continues to be a major driver of the crisis

The number of drug poisoning deaths in Alberta per year (2016-2023)

This data shows all drug poisoning deaths (includes all substances)

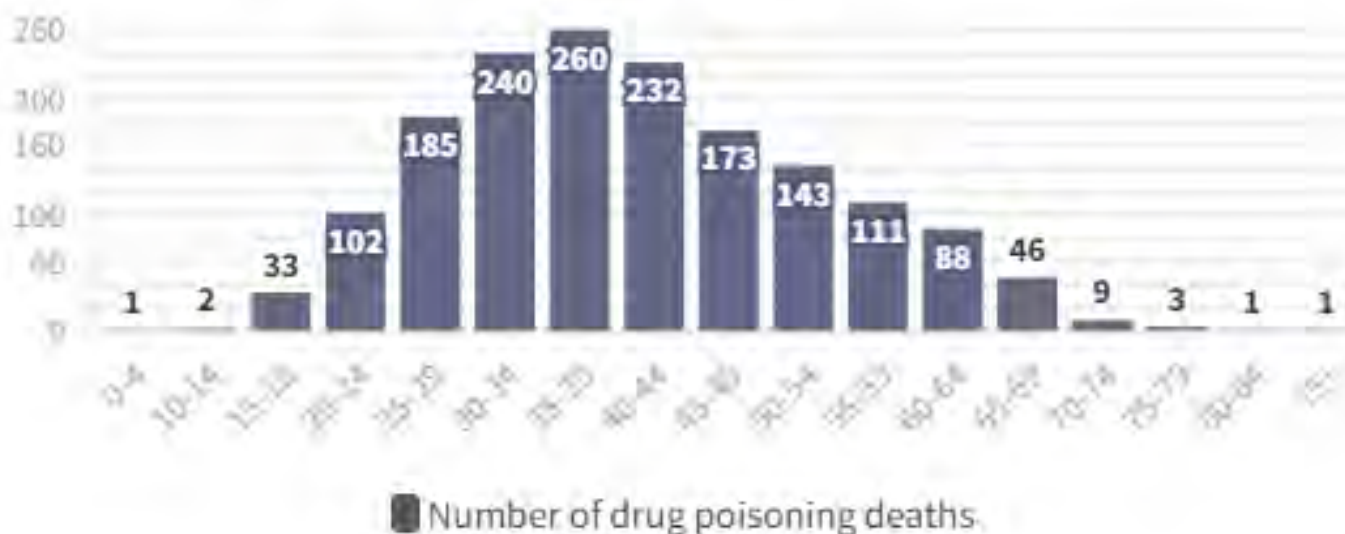
2023 only includes the number of deaths up until Jan. 31, 2023.



Source: [Alberta substance use surveillance system](#) • Graphic: Kyra Markov/CTV News Edmonton

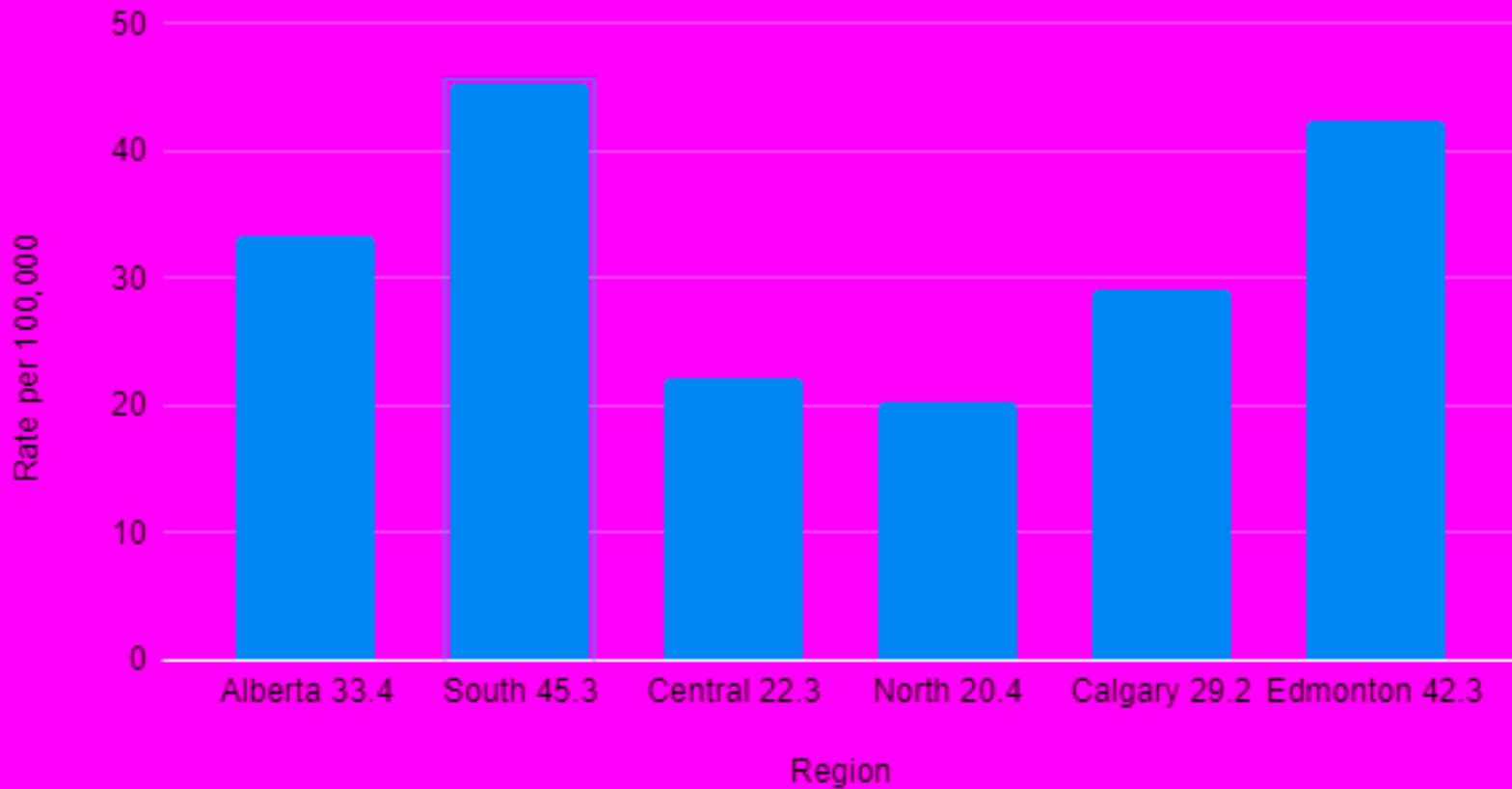
Drug poisoning deaths in Alberta by age group (2022)

This graph includes all drug poisoning deaths (all substances)



Source: [Alberta substance use surveillance system](#) • Graphic: Kyra Markov/CTV News
Edmonton

Rate per 100,000 vs. Region



Location of opioid-poisoning deaths in Alberta

This graph is based on data for Q4 of 2022



Own residence Someone else's residence Other facility Public Hotel

Source: [Alberta Substance Use Surveillance System](#) • Graphic: Kyra Markov/CTV News

Edmonton

How Did This Happen?

Personal trauma, mental health

Stigma & discrimination

Lack of access to treatment and harm reduction

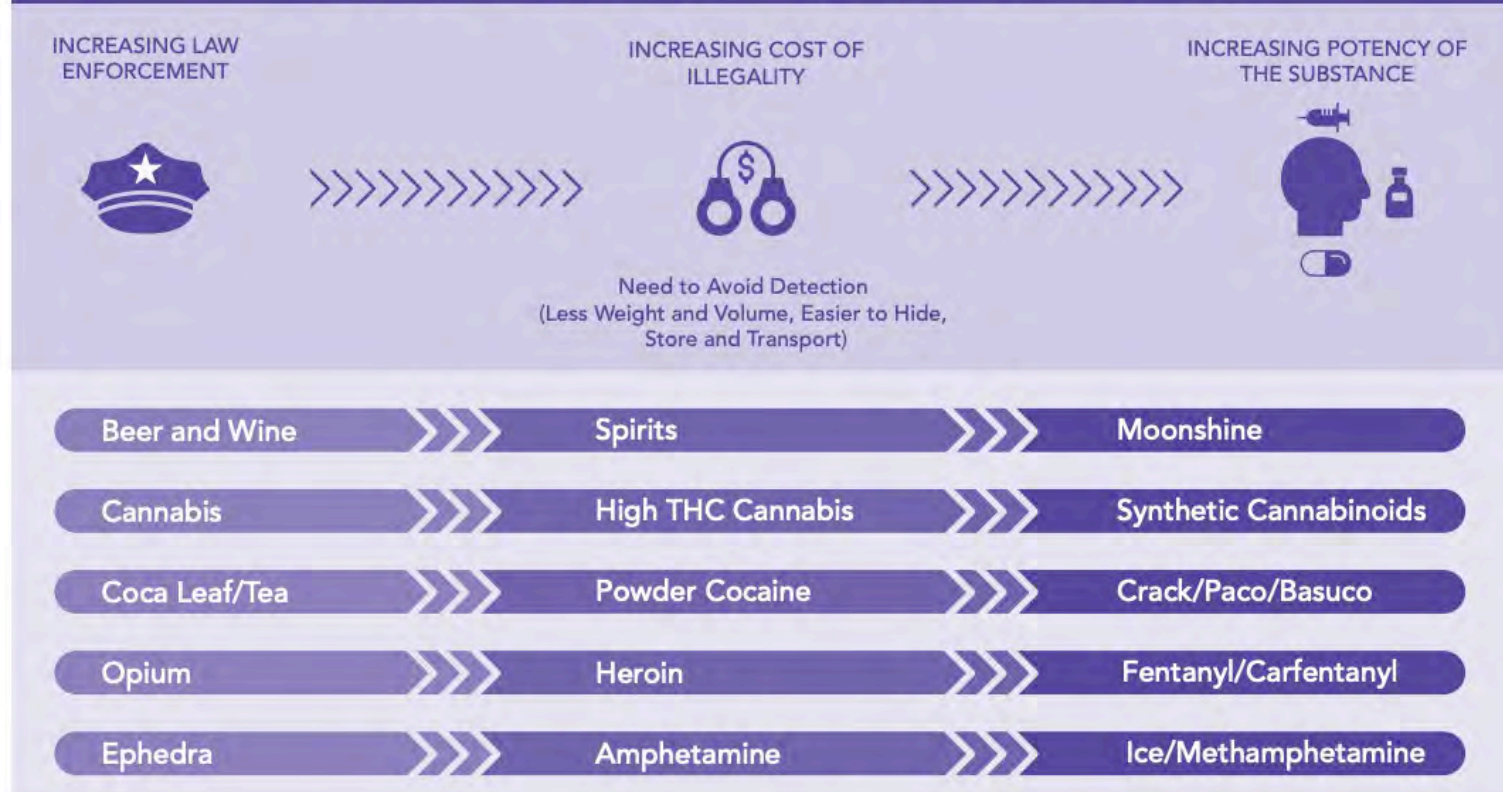
The War on Drugs: Toxic, illegal drug supply

What about the role of pharma?



IRON LAW OF PROHIBITION

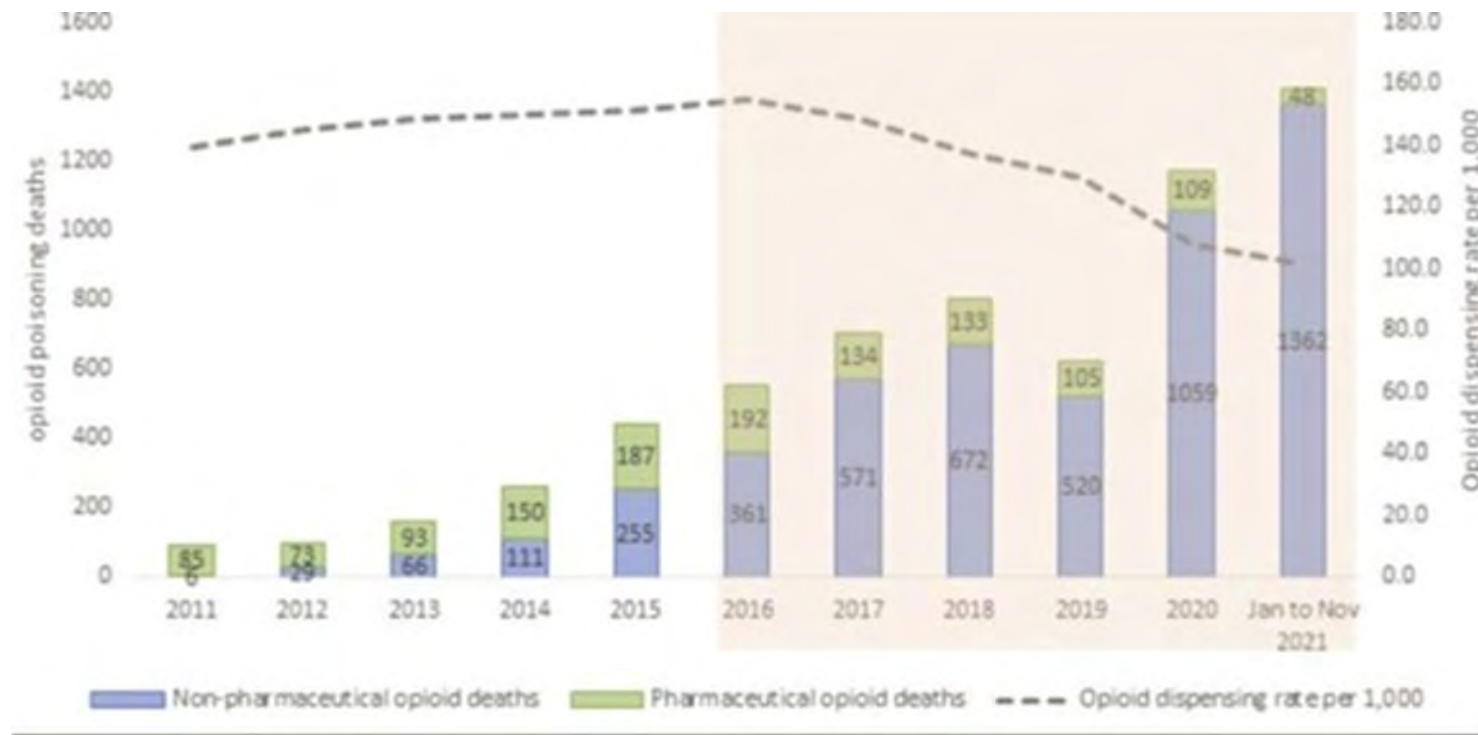
THE HARDER THE ENFORCEMENT, THE HARDER THE DRUGS



Source: Global Commission on Drug Policy. Regulation: The Responsible Control of Drugs. 2018.

http://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ENG-2018_Regulation_Report_WEB-FINAL.pdf

Opioid prescribing and poisoning deaths



Spectrum of Psychoactive Substance Use

Casual/Non-problematic Use

- recreational, casual or other use that has negligible health or social effects

Chronic Dependence

- Use that has become habitual and compulsive despite negative health and social effects



Beneficial Use

- use that has positive health, spiritual or social impact:
- e.g. medical pharmaceuticals; coffee/tea to increase alertness; moderate consumption of red wine; sacramental use of ayahuasca or peyote

Problematic Use

- use that begins to have negative consequences for individual, friends/family, or society
- e.g. impaired driving; binge consumption; harmful routes of administration

People use for different reasons and not all use is problematic

WE LOVE YOU.

BE SAFE.

**CARRY
NALOXONE.**



We draw the line at 0%.

#BANTHEBODY

Canadian
Association of
People Who
Use
Drugs

Harm Reduction – Relationships are key!

Harm reduction provides

- Needle exchange & sterile supplies

- Supervised consumption sites

- Naloxone distribution

- Drug safety education

Meeting people where they are at!

DOES NOT increase use or crime!



Unsafe places
to use
become
unsafe places
to die

- LRT Train - mall washroom
- street corner - store entrance
 - a field outside of town
 - in a staircase - back alley
- in a parked car - rooming house
 - a strangers or a friend's house
- outside an SCS when it was closed
- near an SCS after the government shut it down

~~Being clean~~

People in recovery

~~Drug abuse~~

Drug use

~~Addicts~~

People who
use drugs

~~Junkies~~

People with
substance
use disorder

CANADA.CA/HEALTH

Canada

THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN REDUCING STIGMA

Follow these two key principles:

1. Use neutral, [medically] accurate terminology when describing substance use
2. Use “people-first” language, that focuses first on the individual or individuals, not the action (e.g. “people who use drugs”)

Responding to substance use

Speak	Speak to the person about your concerns
Be	Be calm, factual and do not blame or accuse
Don't make	Don't make your support conditional
Stay	Stay prepared and respond without judgement
Inform	Inform yourself – keep them safe
Take	Take care of yourself



Youth and substance use

Harm reduction approach:

- Discourage use
- Set clear expectations
- Stay engaged
- Model good behaviour

Image: Island Health



Youth Substance Use – Safety First

Factual education

- Introduction to harm reduction
- Types of substances,
- Effects & side-effects, benefits & harms
- Peers and social situations
- Substance use and mental health

- Source: Drug Policy Alliance. (2019). Safety First. Retrieved from <https://www.drugpolicy.org/resource/safety-first-real-drug-education-teens>

S	Stimulation and Call 911
A	Airway
V	Ventilate (Rescue Breathing)
E	Evaluate the Situation
M	Muscular Injection of Naloxone
E	Evaluate Again (Care after an Opioid Overdose)

Responding to an Opioid Overdose

2/6/2023

PETRA SCHULZ - MOMS STOP THE HARM

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Drug user safety rules

Don't	• Don't use drugs alone.
Agree	• Agree with your friends that you will all not use the same drug(s) at the same time.
Have	• Have a safe observer so there is someone to help if necessary.
Avoid	• Avoid mixing drugs with alcohol or different drugs.
Keep	• Keep Naloxone with you when you use.
Test	• Test your supply using drug testing kits when possible.

2/6/2023

PETRA SCHULZ - MOMS STOP THE HARM

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Signs of overdose – drug poisoning
Prevent Overdose RI (n.d.) <http://preventoverdose.org/respond-to-overdose/>

2/6/2023

PETRA SCHULZ - MOMS STOP THE HARM

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Youth and Harm Reduction



Harm reduction continuum:

- Abstain
- Use less harmful substances
- Use less or less often
- Use in a less harmful way
- Never use alone

- Drug Policy Alliance. (2019). Safety First. Retrieved from <https://www.drugpolicy.org/resource/safety-first-real-drug-education-teens>





What can communities do?

Demand access to evidence based treatment

Focus on voluntary treatment

Support local and provincial harm reduction initiatives

Provide support for groups – SMART Recovery

Look at the underlying causes of substance use and support prevention measures

Be open, be kind be generous - Don't discriminate!

CRISM National Guideline

for the Clinical Management of

OPIOID USE DISORDER



Evidence based treatment for opioid use

Withdrawal management alone should be avoided

Suboxone is the first-line treatment for people starting on Opioid Agonist Treatment – OAT

Methadone [Kadian] is recommended if Suboxone is not preferable

[for patients where conventional OAT does not work pharmaceutical alternatives can be prescribed]

- <https://crismprairies.ca/national-opioid-use-disorder-guidelines/>



Alberta Minister of mental health and addiction Nicholas Milliken speaks during a media event Tuesday, February 14, 2023. PHOTO BY AZIN GHAFARI /Postmedia

Do I need to go to rehab?

8000 new spaces

Long wait times for in-patient and detox

Lack of regulation of treatment industry

No data on

- who is using the facilities
- For what reasons
- Short, medium or long-term outcomes
- Critical incidents
- Value for money spent

Treatment needs to be voluntary, evidence based and accountable!

Methamphetamine (Oral Route)

Description and Brand Names

Before Using

Proper Use

Precautions

Side Effects

Products and services

The Mayo Clinic Diet

Description and Brand Names

Drug information provided by: [IBM Micromedex](#)

US Brand Name

Desoxyn

Descriptions

Methamphetamine is used to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It belongs to the group of medicines called central nervous system (CNS) stimulants.

What about stimulants?

Desoxyn is licensed in the US, but not in Canada

Other meds include Ritalin and Adderall – less effective

People with a history of substance use have trouble getting prescriptions for ADHD meds, even with a diagnosis of ADHD

Regulated Substances = Crime Prevention

“Safer Supply” – Regulated alternatives to toxic street drugs

Public health intervention

Known amount of a drug from a regulated source

Protects from drugs that from an unknown source with an unknown content.

Not substance use treatment

Majority of Canadians Support Decriminalization of All Drugs



Decriminalize People who use drugs

MSTH CALLS FOR THE FULL
DECriminalIZATION OF PEOPLE WHO USE
DRUGS

We do not criminalize other health
conditions.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

‘Decriminalization’ of personal drug possession in BC

Are you protected by BC’s decriminalization policy?

YES

and your
drugs won’t
be confiscated

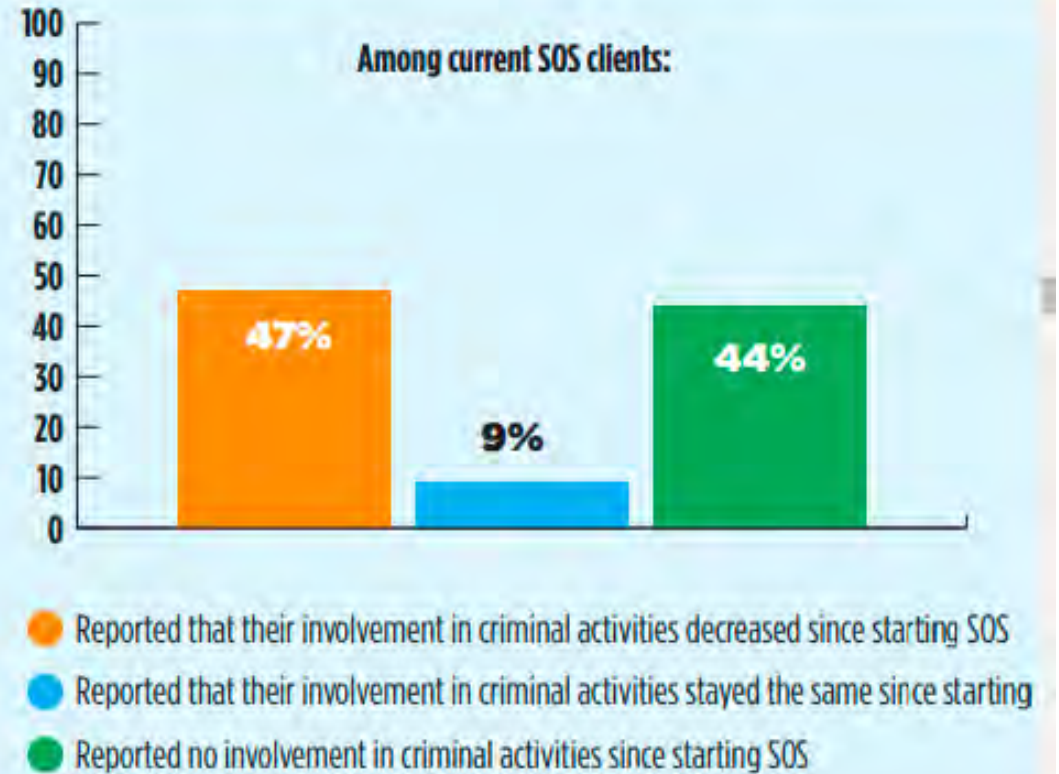
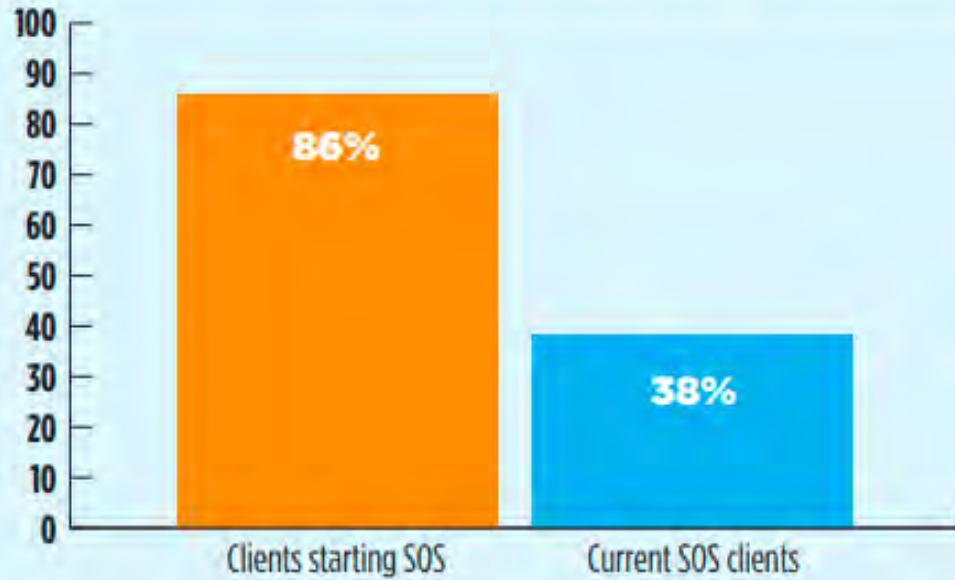
You’re 18+, in BC (& not crossing a domestic or international border), AND you possess **less than 2.5 grams TOTAL** of any of these drugs: opioids, cocaine, meth, MDMA (ecstasy)



2/5

DRUGS

Involvement in criminal activities to pay for or get drugs in the last 6 months



London, Ontario's [Safer Opioid Supply](#) program evaluation data, January 2022.

Among many other positive outcomes, participants reported huge reductions in criminal activities.



We need to redefine recovery
Ophelia Black , Garth Mullins and Guy Felicella



MSTH engages in Advocacy and Peer Support



IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS' LIVES

My whole lifestyle improved

Opened a whole new outlook and positive way of living

Got my life back

Positive influence on what else you do

My life has improved drastically

Enabled me to move forward in my life and not be at a standstill

It saved my life

Life is so much better

There's a lot less edge on my day

I function productively in society

Allowed me to focus on more positive direction

My life is getting better

100% more stable than I have ever been

Frees time to do more constructive things

My life has been a hardship, a mountain, but I now know happiness

More energy and confidence to focus on my art

I can devote time hunting for and keeping a job, make appointments



Health
Canada

Santé
Canada

Canada

Stronger Together Canada – supporting families

Peer led support groups:

Healing Heart groups for families who have lost loved ones healingheartscanada.org

Holding Hope Groups for families whose loved ones are using substances
holdinghopecanada.org

- STCA is funded by the Health Canada Substance Use and Addictions Program (SUAP)
- STBC is funded by the government of BC



MSTH advocates for:

Access to regulated substances #safesupply

Decriminalization of PWUD

Harm reduction - hope

Rapid Access to evidence-based treatment

Upstream prevention

Meaningful inclusion in all decisions that affect us!





Shameless Plug - @CherryMintRose



YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/@cherrymintrose>

Videos on the intersectionality of autism, ADHD, substance Use and gender

Resource Recommendations

CRACKDOWN

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Crackdown Podcast

- Episode 4 Blame [MSTH]
- Episode 37 Drugstore Cowboy [diversion]

Chasing the Scream by Johann Hari

Progress Report: Ophelia in Her Own Words

Substack: Drug Data Decoded (Blog)

Canadian Drug Policy Coalition

Building Hope: Substance use in the Trades (Film)

Filter Magazine - Harm reduction journalism

I am so glad you are here!

Websites

momstoptheharm.com

holdinghopecanada.org

healingheartscanada.org

Social Media – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
[@momstoptheharm](https://www.instagram.com/momsstoptheharm)

